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BALES ON THE TRAIL TO BRING STORIES TO LIFE ACROSS THE UNDISCOVERED THIS NOVEMBER

Residents and visitors will have a new reason to explore *The Undiscovered* region this November, with the launch of Bales on the Trail - a unique visitor experience that will see hay bale sculptures appear across farming properties throughout the region.

The inaugural event invites local farmers to transform ordinary hay bales into creative sculptures, creating a self-guided trail for visitors to follow throughout November. This year's theme is *The Magic Between the Pages*, celebrating the stories, characters, imagination and adventures found in books. From beloved book characters and magical creatures to memorable literary scenes, the trail will celebrate imagination, creativity and community spirit while showcasing the region's farming landscapes.

Developed as a positive recovery initiative following the 2026 bushfires, Bales on the Trail aims to bring people together, foster community pride and encourage visitors to travel throughout *The Undiscovered* region, supporting local businesses and communities along the way.

PEDIGREE® has joined Bales on the Trail as the event's founding sponsor, providing generous support to help bring the community-led initiative to life in its first year.

Towong Shire Mayor Peter Tolsher said the event would create a memorable new experience for locals and visitors while highlighting the creativity and resilience of farming communities.

"Bales on the Trail is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the character, imagination and community spirit of our farming communities while creating a fun and accessible new experience for people to enjoy across *The Undiscovered* region," Mayor Tolsher said.

"We have all driven past hay bales countless times, but this event invites farmers to see them differently and turn them into something memorable. I think people will be amazed by what is created."

Farmers are encouraged to draw inspiration from favourite novels, children's books, fairy tales and literary classics, creating sculptures that bring stories to life in unexpected ways.

Mayor Tolsher said the event would also spark some healthy competition among participants.

"One thing I know about our farming communities is that they enjoy a bit of friendly rivalry. Once the ideas start flowing and the sculptures begin appearing across the Shire, I'm sure everyone will be keen to see who has created the most imaginative display," Mayor Tolsher said.

"Whether it is something big and bold or simple and clever, every participant will be helping create an experience that people will want to get out and explore."

More than \$1,400 in prizemoney and prizes will be on offer, including a \$500 first prize in the People's Choice Awards. The prestigious *Golden Bale* Award also carries a \$500 cash prize for the sculpture judged to best demonstrate creativity, originality and interpretation of the theme. Additional prizes will be awarded for second and third place.

Registrations are now open for eligible farmers across *The Undiscovered* – the *Upper Murray*, *Mitta Valley*, and *Lake Hume* regions. Farmers can visit the Bales on the Trail website (www.balesonthetrail.com.au) to register and receive further information and guidelines on the event.

Once all sculptures are in place for November, the website will transition into a public-facing trail guide, allowing visitors to view sculpture locations, plan their journey, and vote online for their favourite creations as part of the People's Choice Awards.

As the first year of the event, Council hopes Bales on the Trail will grow into a signature annual attraction for *The Undiscovered* region.

"This is the beginning of what we hope will become a much-loved tradition," Mayor Tolsher said.

"We are looking forward to seeing communities get behind the event, visitors hitting the road to discover the trail and farmers embracing the opportunity to have some fun and showcase their creativity."

Council also extended its sincere thanks to PEDIGREE® for its generous support as founding sponsor.

"Pedigree's commitment to farming communities and regional recovery has helped transform a community idea into a reality. We are incredibly grateful for their investment in this event and their support for the people and communities across *The Undiscovered* region." Mayor Tolsher said.

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